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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000397

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR OF BAGHDAD ORDERS DE-BA'ATHIFICATION
MEASURES FOR PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

REF: A. (A) BAGHDAD 310

[B](#). (B) BAGHDAD 200

Classified By: Classified by Baghdad PRT Team Leader Tom Lynch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Baghdad Message.

[1](#)2. (SBU)SUMMARY: The Iraqi media reported that Baghdad Governor Salah Abd al-Razzaq ordered the provincial government to "begin a campaign to apply de-Ba'athification measures" to provincial government employees who are running for parliament and who were included in the Accountability and Justice Commission's (AJC) de-Ba'athification list. PRT Baghdad met with Abd al-Razzaq on February 7 to discuss this reported order and the impact of the de-Ba'athification debate within Baghdad. PRT countered the Governor's complaint that the USG interfered in the de-Ba'athification process. The Governor rejected the U.S. Government's purported approach in a written statement to PRT Baghdad.

ANTI-BA'ATHIST RHETORIC

[1](#)3. (SBU) PRT Baghdad met Governor Abd al-Razzaq February 7 to discuss his reported order to remove provincial government employees who had been included in the parliamentary Accountability and Justice Commission's (AJC) de-Ba'athification order (Ref B). He criticized what he characterized as the U.S. Government's intervention in the de-Ba'athification issue. Later in the day, Razzaq led a protest in front of the Governorate municipal building in downtown Baghdad, rejecting the nomination alleged Ba'athists as candidates in the upcoming national elections. Razzaq called on demonstrators to avoid violence, and protest peacefully in order to effectively communicate their message to national politicians.

[1](#)4. (C) Razzaq handed PRToffs a statement, which follows (English as original): "There recently has been controversy on the prevention of the Ba'athists from participating in elections under Article 7 of the Iraqi Constitution and the decision of the Accountability and Justice Commission. There are parties who want the Ba'athists to participate, who are calling on powers, regional countries, and international intervention in this regard. I have made statements to the press that shows my amazement by these calls for intervention from the U.S. and European countries to allow the criminal Ba'athists to participate in the elections. I compared this scenario to asking a U.S. President to accept al-Qa'ida on U.S. soil, and allowing them to establish offices in Washington, D.C. and New York."

[1](#)5. (C) PRToffs rejected Razzaq's accusation of inappropriate USG interference. They assured the Governor that the U.S. position on Ba'athism had not changed, and that the United States respects the independence of Iraq's judicial and electoral authorities. However, PRToffs noted that every

Iraqi citizen has a right to due process under Iraqi law,
including candidates for the upcoming election.

ANTI-BA'ATHIST ACTIONS

¶6. (C) Razzaq is pursuing what he terms a "Ba'athist
cleansing," removing individuals from the ranks of his
organization. He did not explain to PRToffs what this
"cleansing" of Ba'athists would mean in practice (Ref A).
(COMMENT: It may be possible that Razzaq is exploiting this
issue to burnish his "anti-Saddam" credentials within his
Da'wa party and the State of Law Alliance, and does not
intend to fire the few provincial employees who were named on
the AJC's de-Ba'athification list. PRT will continue to
track this issue. END COMMENT)

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Razzaq has formerly maintained a respectable distance
Q7. (C) Razzaq has formerly maintained a respectable distance
from overtly campaigning on behalf of his national party
(Da'wa), although he is normally very close to PM Maliki.
His words and actions about purported Ba'athists in local
government are the first time he has overtly campaigned on a
national election issue. END COMMENT.
FORD